5-2017

The Use of Vocal Vibrato in Contemporary Performances of Early Music

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THE USE OF VOCAL VIBRATO IN CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCES OF EARLY MUSIC

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

University Honors

in

Choral Education
in the Department of Music

Approved:

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Spring 2017

Abstract

The aim of this project is to help collegiate vocalists reconcile opposing views of applying vibrato to contemporary performances of early music. First, written materials, both modern and historical, were evaluated and compiled in a comprehensive review. Some early authors appeared to dislike vibrato-like qualities, while others believed them to be pleasant so long as they were used in moderation. Modern authors displayed an array of views about vibrato, with arguments ranging from "vibrato use only" to "straight-tone use only." They were found to generally base their opinions on vocal health and/or personal interpretations of historical data, though there was no apparent correlation between primary influence and opinion. In addition to reviewing literature, interviews regarding vibrato in early music were held with renowned musicians. Specifically, Emma Kirkby, Nicholas Clapton, and members of Stile Antico were interviewed at the Dartington International Summer School in Totnes, UK, and Craig Trompeter and Craig Jessop were interviewed on campus at USU. It appears that these musicians share influences of vocal health, history, and expression when determining vibrato usage in early music. Like authors in the literature review, these musicians' arguments show no correlation between primary influence and consequential vocal practices. It was concluded that the use or lack of vibrato in early music is not inherent to the repertoire, but rather, changes from piece to piece depending on the values of the performer. By studying the values of authors and musicians evaluated in this project, collegiate vocalists may not only better understand conflicting directions they receive, but also begin to develop their own values and approaches to vibrato. In this way, singers may be able to make decisions about vibrato in early music that are both informed as well as personally authentic.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Scheer for his guidance and mentorship throughout this project and my education as a whole. I would also like to thank my most influential professors, Dallas Heaton, Cindy Dewey, and Tim Chenette, for the resources and inspiration they provided during my years at USU, and my parents, as well, for their financial and emotional support. Finally, I would like to thank the USU Honors Program and URCO for providing me with the necessary funding for this project, making my research possible.

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Final Written Product

Introduction

The application of vocal vibrato in pre-1750 repertoire is a subject of frequent debate among musicians and scholars.[1] In fact, music critic Donal Henahan describes this topic as "a separate morass, a swamp of argument into which only the fearless specialist dares to venture very far."[2] University settings are not exempt from this "swamp of argument;" collegiate vocalists are commonly faced with conflicting instructions about vibrato, especially where early music is concerned.[3] The aim of this project is to help vocal students reconcile varying views and practices of applying vibrato to pre-1750 repertoire by analyzing authors' arguments in a comprehensive literature review, as well as opinions expressed in interviews with early music musicians.

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[1] For example, Terence Kelly refers to a "vibrato debate among musicologists who cite an increasing number of historical sources in justifying the presence or lack of vibrato..." Similarly, Bernard Sherman brings up "a much debated question: how much vibrato was used in Baroque singing?" in his interview with performance practice specialist and early music vocalist, Julianne Baird. See Terence Kelly, "The Authenticity of Continuous Vocal Vibrato: An empirical and historical investigation," *The Official Journal Of The National Association Of Teachers Of Singing* 51, no. 3: 3; Bernard Sherman, *Inside Early Music: Conversations with performers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 234-235.

[2] Donal Henahan, "When Vibrato is on Shaky Ground," *American Choral Review* 29, no. 2 (1987): 11.

[3] For example, John Nix, Margaret Olson, and Virginia Sublett all acknowledge that collegiate vocal students are often faced with conflicting instructions about vibrato, generally from private vocal instructors and choral directors. Nix found that most vocalists receive instruction for vibrato from their private vocal instructors and direction for straight tone from their choral directors in a survey he conducted. Sublett supports his findings by explaining that many vocal faculty members and early music choral directors tend to disagree on the aesthetics of vibrato. Olson adds that undergraduate vocalists often simultaneously participate in both solo and choral genres, which frequently have differing directions about vibrato. See John Nix, "Shaken, not stirred: Practical ideas for addressing vibrato and nonvibrato singing in the studio and the choral rehearsal," *Journal Of Singing: The Official Journal Of The National Association Of Teachers Of Singing* 70, no. 4 (2014): 411-418; Margaret Olson, "Vibrato vs. Nonvibrato: The solo singer in the collegiate choral ensemble," *Journal Of Singing: The Official Journal Of The National Association Of Teachers Of Singing* 64, no. 5 (2008): 561-564; Virgina Sublett, "Vibrato or Nonvibrato in Solo and Choral Singing: Is there room for both?," *Journal of Singing* 65, no. 5 (2009): 539-544.

Literature Review

Early authors had varying opinions of vocal elements resembling vibrato. However, a unified, definable term for vibrato did not exist in years preceding 1750, making it difficult for modern readers to interpret early writings.[4] Contemporary scholars speculate that vibrato as it is defined today[5] is referenced in the following frequently-discussed[6] historical accounts: Pier Francesco Tosi's 1723 *Opinioni de'cantori antichi e moderni, o sieno Osservazioni sopra il canto figurato*, Christoph Bernhard's 1649 *Von der Singe-Kunst, oder Maniera*, Lodovico Zacconi's 1592 *Prattica di musica*, letters written by W.A. Mozart to his father in 1778, and Michael Praetorius' 1619 *Syntagma Musicum III*.

Tosi and Bernhard both show aversion to vibrato-like qualities, but for differing reasons. Tosi warns against attributes similar to vibrato, such as "trembling," "[keeping] the Voice in Motion," and "Flutt'ring," because he believes they are characteristics exhibited by amateur singers.[7] Bernhard claims that the vibrato-like trait "tremulo" is an undesirable defect of

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[4]Modern scholars, such as Nicolas Isherwood and Greta Moens-Haenen, have gathered terms from historical sources that they believe to be in reference to vibrato. For example, Isherwood states that words such as *flatte, balancement, chevrottement, petits tremblements de deu, apirations douce, suono flautato, trillo cavallino,* and *trillo caprine* have been used to describe various kinds of vibrato in early treatises. A more expansive list is included in Moens-Haenen's *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock: ein Handbuch zur Aufführungspraxis für Vokalisten und Instrumentalisten*. This book contains a comprehensive glossary of vibrato terms with references to the historical sources in which they can be found. See Nicholas Isherwood, "Vocal Vibrato: New directions," *Journal Of Singing: The Official Journal Of The National Association Of Teachers Of Singing* 65, no. 3 (2009): 271, accessed April 2, 2016, http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rih&AN=2009-00501&site=ehost-live; Greta Moens-Haenen, *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock: Ein Handbuch zur Aufführungspraxis für Vokalisten und Instrumentalisten,* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 2004,) 286 – 292.

[5] See Appendix A.

[6] See Appendix B.

[7] Tosi states, "Let him learn to hold out the Notes without a Shrillneſs like a Trumpet, or trembling; and if at the Beginning he made him hold out every Note the length of two Bars, the Improvement would be the greater, otherwiſe, from the natural Inclination that the Beginners have to keep the Voice in Motion, and the Trouble in holding it out, he will get a Habit, and not be able to fix it, and will become ſubject to a Flutt'ring in the Manner of all thoſe that ſing in a very bad Taſte."

aging voices. He additionally states that "the maintenance of a steady voice is required on all notes," except when deliberately applying ornaments.[8] Zacconi, Mozart, and Praetoruis appear to be more accepting of traits reminiscent of vibrato than Tosi and Bernhard, however, they each warn that these vibrato-esque qualities should be used within reason. Using terminology comparable to that of Bernhard's, Zacconi claims that "tremolo should be slight and pleasing."[9] Praetorius expresses a similar opinion by praising a "pleasantly vibrating voice," yet warning that these vibrato-like vibrations should be executed with

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[Gli faccia imparare di sostener le note fenza, che la voce titubi, o vacilli, e se l'insegnamento comincia da quelle di due battute l'una, il profitto fara maggiore, altramente dal genio, che hanno i Principianti di muoverla, e dalla fatica di fermarla si affuefara anch' esso a non poterla piu fissare, e avra indubitamente il difetto di svolazzar sempre all'uso di chi canta di sessimo gusto.]
See Pier Francesco Tosi, *Observations on the Florid Song; or, Sentiments on the Ancient and Modern Singers*, trans. Mr. Galliard, (London: J. Wilcox, 1743), 53, accessed June 29, 2016, http://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ReverseLookup/69822; Tosi, *Opinioni de'cantori antichi e moderni, o sieno Osservazioni sopra il canto figurato*, (Bologna, 1723), 47.

[8] Bernhard says, "*Fermo*, or the maintenance of a steady voice, is required on all notes, except where a *trillo* or *ardire* is applied. It is regarded as a refinement mainly because the *tremulo* [*sic*] is a defect... Elderly singers feature the *tremulo*, but not as an artifice. Rather it creeps in by itself, as they no longer are able to hold their voices steady. If anyone would demand further evidence of the undesirability of the *tremulo*, let him listen to such an old man employing it while singing alone. Then he will be able to judge why the *tremulo* is not used by the most polished singers, except in *ardire*."
[Das *fermo* oder festhalten der Stimme, wird bey allen Noten erfordert, ausgenommen, wo das *trillo* oder *ardire* gebraucht wird, und insonderheit die Zierde des *fermo* ist daraus zu verstehen, weil das *tremulo*... Ein *vitium* ist, welches bey den alten Sängern nicht al seine Kunst angebracht wird, sondern sich selbst einschleichet, weil selbige nicht mehr die Stimme festzuhalten vermögen. Wer aber mehr Zeugniß begehret vom Übelstande des *tremulo*, der höre einen alten *tremulirenden* zu, wenn selbiger alleine singet; so wird er urteilen können, warum das *Tremulum* von den vornehmsten Sängern nicht gebraucht wird, es sey den in *ardire*, davon drunten. Wiewohl es auch an andern Orthen den *Bassisten* vergönnt ist, doch mit dem Bedinge, daß sie es selten und bey kurtzen Noten anbringen.] See Christoph Bernhard, *Von der Singe-Kunst, oder Maniera,* (1649), trans. by Ellen T. Harris, found in Ellen T. Harris, "Voices," in *Performance Practice: Music after 1600*, edited by Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990,) 104; Christoph Bernhard, *Von der Singe-Kunst, oder Maniera,* (1649), quoted in Greta Moens-Haenen, *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock: Ein Handbuch zur Aufführungspraxis für Vokalisten und Instrumentalisten*, (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 1988), 177.

[9] Zacconi states, "the tremolo, that is the tremulous voice, is the true portal to the *passaggi*, and the means of mastering the *gorgia* [i.e. coloraturas] . . . This tremolo should be slight and pleasing; for if it is exaggerated and forced, it tires and annoys; its nature is such that, if used at all, it should always be used..."
[perche quel continuo mouer di uoce, aiuta, & uolontieri spinga la mossa delle gorgie, & facilita mirabilmente i principij di passaggi.] See Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica*, trans. E. V. Foreman, (Venice, 1592), quoted in Fredrick Neumann, "The Vibrato Controversy," *Performance Practice Review* 4, no. 1 (1991): 18, accessed May 22, 2016, DOI: 10.5642/perfpr.199104.01.3.; Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica*, (Venice, 1592).

"particular moderation."[10] Like Zacconi and Praetorius, Mozart advises against excessive vibrations, claiming a natural vibrancy of the voice is admirable, but when it is carried too far, it "ceases to be beautiful, because it is unnatural."[11]

Perhaps the most extensive review of Baroque writings believed to be in reference to vibrato is Greta Moens-Haenen's *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock*. After a thorough examination of numerous historical accounts, Moens-Haenen concludes that a subtle, naturally produced vibrato was used in the Baroque period. She argues that persistent use of large, artificially produced vibrato was undesirable in years preceding 1750, though favorable if used as an ornament.[12]

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[10] In full, Praetoruis' requirement states: "first, the requirement that a singer must have a pleasantly vibrating voice (not, however, as some are trained to do in schools, but with particular moderation.)"
[Die Requisita sind diese: daß ein Sänger erstlich eine schöne liebliche zittern- vnd bebende Stimme (soch nicht also / wie etliche in Schulen gewohnet seyn / sondern mit besonderer moderation)] See Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum III*, trans. Carol MacClintock, (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), quoted in Carol MacClintock, *Readings in the History of Music in Performance,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 164; Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum III*, (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), quoted in Greta Moens-Haenen, *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock: Ein Handbuch zur Aufführungspraxis für Vokalisten und Instrumentalisten*, (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 1988), 18.

[11] In a letter to his father, Mozart writes, "Meissner, as you know, has the bad habit of purposefully pulsating the voice, marking on a long-held note all the quarters and sometimes even the eights – and that manner of his I have never been able to tolerate. It is truly abominable and such singing runs counter to nature... The human voice vibrates by itself, but in a way and to a degree that is beautiful – this is the nature of the voice, and one imitates it not only on wind instruments, but also on strings, and even on the clavichord, but as soon as one carries it too far, it ceases to be beautiful, because it unnatural."
[Meißner hat wie sie wissen, die üble gewohnheit, daß er oft mit fleiss mit der stimme zittert – ganze viertl – ja oft gar achtl in aushaltender Note marquirt – und das habe ich an ihm nie leiden können. das ist auch wircklich abscheulich. das ist völlig ganz wieder die Natur u singen... die Menschenstimme zittert schon selbst – aber so – in einem solchen grade, daß es schön ist – daß ist die Natur der stimme. man macht ihrs auch nicht allein auf den blas-instrumenten, sondern auch auf den geigen instrumenten nach – ja so gar auf den Claviern – so bald man aber über die schrancken geht, so ist es nicht mehr schön – weil es wieder die Natur ist.] See Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to Leopold Mozart, letter, June 12, 1778, trans. Fredrick Neumann, quoted in Fredrick Neumann, "Authenticity and the Vocal Vibrato," *American Choral Review* 29, no. 2 (1987): 16; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to Leopold Mozart, letter, June 12, 1778, quoted in Greta Moens-Haenen, *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock: Ein Handbuch zur Aufführungspraxis für Vokalisten und Instrumentalisten*, (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck, 1988), 17, 23.

[12] Moens-Haenen, *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock*, 271 – 279.

While historical knowledge can be beneficial to performing early music, problems arise when this information is used in attempt to replicate the past, a concept known as "historical authenticity." The notion of historical authenticity developed from a movement known today as the early music revival. This movement started approximately half way through the 20th century when an increasing number of scholars and musicians began to explore pre-1750 repertoire, applying historical knowledge to performance.[13] In doing so, a new definition of authenticity developed where a performance was deemed "authentic" if it executed the composer's intent and/or resembled an accurate recreation of the past. Many scholars[14] (the most vocal of whom being Richard Taruskin)[15] explain that we have no way of knowing the intentions of early composers or what music sounded like in years preceding 1750, and therefore, historical authenticity should not be the goal of early music performance. However, this is not to say that historical information cannot play any role in early music. Taruskin notes that studying history can provide us with new ways of performing this repertoire, as it can challenge our conventional methods of music making, thus creating a personally authentic performance. He states,

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[13] Neal Zaslaw, "Reflections on 50 Years of Early Music," *Early Music* 29, no. 1 (2001): 5-12, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3519085.

[14] Howard Mayer Brown, Laurence Dreyfus, Aron Edidin, Dorottya Fabian, Harry Haskell, Bruce Haynes, John Hendron, Joseph Kerman, Nicholas Mcgegan, Barthold Kuijken, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Christopher Page, Peter Phillips, Jonathan Shull, Richard Taruskin, Nicholas Temperley, Barbara Thornton, and Nigel Rogers discuss the invalidity of historical authenticity. See Howard Mayer Brown, "Choral Music in the Renaissance," *Early Music* 6, no. 2 (1978): 164-169, accessed May 20, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3125600; Laurence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended against its Devotees: A theory of historical performance in the twentieth century," *The Musical Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (1983): 297-322, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/742175; Aron Edidin, "Playing Bach His Way: Historical authenticity, personal authenticity, and the performance of classical music," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 32, no. 4 (1998): 79-91, accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3333387; Dorottya Fabian, "The Meaning of Authenticity and The Early Music Movement: A historical review," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 32, no. 2 (2001): 153-167, accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1562264; Harry Haskell, "*The Early Music Revival: A history* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988,) 175-188; Bruce Haynes, *The End of*

> The object is not to duplicate the sounds of the past, for if that were our aim we would never know whether we had succeeded. What we are aiming at, rather, is the startling shock of newness, of immediacy, the sense of rightness that occurs when after countless frustrating experiments we feel as though we have achieved the identification of performance style with the demands of the music [...] as the hallmark of a living tradition.[16]

Personal interpretation of historical data is one of two predominant factors that influence contemporary writers' opinions of vibrato in early music, the other being vocal health.[17] While many modern authors evaluated in this review consider these ideas in their arguments, they each draw differing conclusions about the role of vibrato in early music. This can be observed by comparing the graphics on the following page. Authors' conclusions are visualized as a spectrum with those who advocate for exclusive use of straight tone on

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Early Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9-10; John Hendron, "A Place for Authenticity in Education: Taking a Musical Debate One Step Further," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 7, no. 2 (1999): 93-104, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40327140; Joseph Kerman, Richard Taruskin, Nicholas McGegan, "The Early Music Debate: Ancients, moderns, postmoderns," *The Journal of Musicology* 10, no. 1 (1992): 113-130, accessed May 21, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/763564, Barthold Kuijken, "The Underlying Philosophy," in *The Notation is Not The Music: Reflections on early music practice and performance,* Palo Alto, California: Ebrary, 2013, https://library.usu.edu/catlog/url856.php?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/usulibraries/Doc?id=10738874; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "What We Are Doing with Early Music is Genuinely Authentic to Such a Small Degree That the Word Loses Most of its Intended Meaning," *Early Music* 12, no. 1 (1984): 13-16, accessed May 20, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3127147; Christopher Page, "The English 'a cappella' Renaissance," *Early Music* 21, no. 3 (1993) 453-471, accessed May 20, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3128297; Peter Phillips, "HIP Replacements," *Musical Times* 155, no. 1928 (2014): 93-100, accessed May 17, 2016, http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=98322938&site=eds-live; Jonathan Shull, "Locating the Past in the Present: Living traditions and the performance of early music," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 15, no. 1 (2006): 87-111, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184541; Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on music and performance* (New York Oxford University Press, 1995); Nicholas Temperley, "The Movement Puts a Stronger Premium on Novelty than on Accuracy, and Fosters Misrepresentation," *Early Music* 12, no. 1 (1984): 16-20, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3127148; Barbara Thornton and Nigel Rogers, "The Singer's View," *Early Music* 12, no. 4 (1984): 523-525, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3137982.

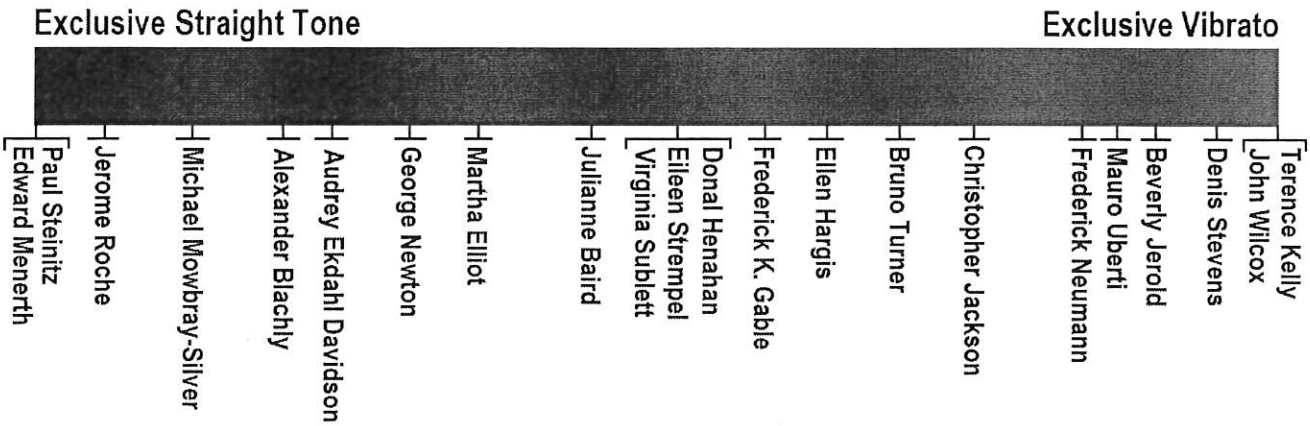
[15] Taruskin wrote an abundance of essays on the matter throughout the 1980's. These essays were written for events such as the national meeting of the American Musicological Society in Boston, and published in journals like *The New York Times,* and books such as *Authenticity and Early Music.* They have since been edited and compiled into a book titled *Text and Act*.

[16] Taruskin, *Text and Act,* 79.

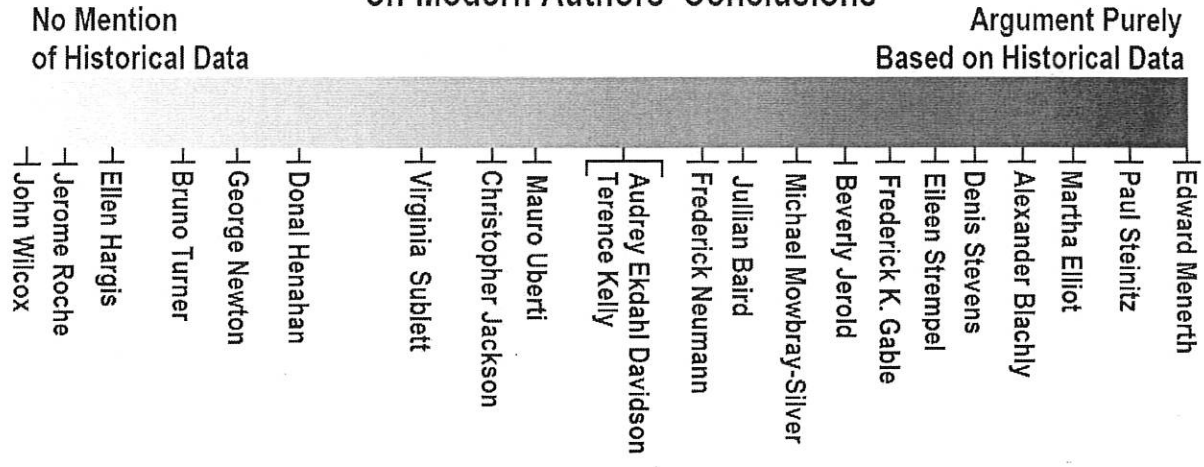
[17] For more on vocal health, see Appendix A.

one end, and those who endorse exclusive vibrato use on the other. The predominant influences of these writers' conclusions are also portrayed on spectrums, ranging from those who never mention historical data/vocal health, to those who base their entire argument on these factors. Authors placed in the center of the predominant influence spectrums are equally influenced by both historical data and vocal health.

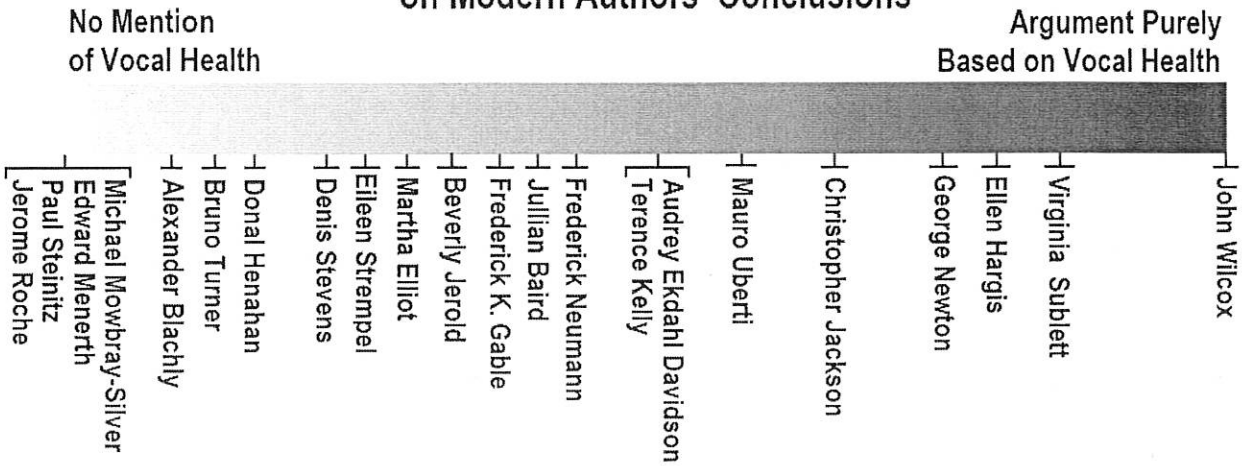
Early Music Vibrato Debate: Modern Authors' Conclusions



Influence of Historical Data on Modern Authors' Conclusions



Influence of Vocal Health on Modern Authors' Conclusions



By comparing these spectrums, it can be observed that there is no consistent correlation between influence and conclusions. This is demonstrated in the arguments of Jerome Roche, Paul Steinitz, and Denis Stevens. In reviewing a concert of Renaissance madrigals conducted by Stevens, Roche complains that excessive use of vibrato ruined the performance because it marred the intonation. He goes on to say that whether vibratoless singing is historically authentic or not does not matter; ensemble singers should use straight tone for tuning purposes.[18] In a follow up review, Steinitz, who occupies a similar position on the conclusion spectrum as Roche, echoes this aversion to vibrato and adds that he is appalled these musicians neglected to observe the "historically informed" performance practice of vibratoless singing.[19] Though his argument is weakened by the fact that straight tone has not been universally accepted as historically informed performance practice, Steinitz's argument in comparison to Roche's shows that similar conclusions do not always follow the same reasoning. Likewise, authors with parallel reasoning do not always come to the same conclusions. Similar to Steinitz, Stevens replies to Roche's critique using history to support his argument. However, he uses historical data, such as Praetorius' *Syntagma Musicum III*, to justify the use of vibrato in early music, landing him on the opposite end of the conclusion spectrum.[20] Though Stevens advocates for the use of vocal vibrato in early music, his language is not as absolute as those on the very end of the exclusive vibrato side

[18] Jerome Roche, "Monteverdi and His Contemporaries," *The Musical Times* 110, no. 1522 (1969): 1252, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/954556.
[19] Paul Steinitz, "Performing Practice," *The Musical Times* 111, no. 1524 (1970): 158, accessed May 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/956737.
[20] Stevens, "Vocal Vibrato," 388.

of the conclusion spectrum, such as John Wilcox and Terence Kelly, which is why he is slightly displaced from the edge.

Wilcox and Kelly both advocate for exclusive use of vibrato without any exceptions, which is why they have been placed on the far vibrato side of the conclusion spectrum. They are both significantly influenced by their concerns for vocal health (though Kelly refers to historical sources as well.) Wilcox believes that singing with a straight tone causes permanent damage to the vocal mechanism, and refers to choral directors who promote vibratoless singing as "priests of the 'straight tone' choral cult."[21] He claims that of all "vocal distortions," straight tone is the most harmful, and therefore, vocalists should never be required to sing in this way.[22] Though he may be overstating his argument, his concerns for vocal health are also shared by Kelly. Kelly adds that singers without vibrato are typically tense or untrained- both cases being inadequate for "the technical demands of Baroque music."[23] He goes on to cite historical sources, like Zacconi's *Prattica di musica*, to support his argument, and concludes that a continuous vocal vibrato is necessary because, "the technical requirements of Baroque music have not changed and are not subject to interpretation."[24]

Like Kelly, Fredrick Neumann, Mauro Uberti, and Beverly Jerold believe this perceived unhealthy nature of straight tone singing makes it unlikely that Baroque vocalists used this technique, and use historical sources to back up their claim. However, Neumann and Uberti

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[21] John C. Wilcox, "The "Straight Tone" in Singing," *Music Educators Journal* 32, no. 2 (1945): 62, accessed May 22, 2016. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3386863.
[22] *Ibid.*, 63.
[23] Kelly, "The Authenticity of Continuous Vocal Vibrato," 3.
[24] *Ibid.*, 4.

admit that there is no way to know how singers sounded in years preceding 1750, and therefore, vibrato cannot be deemed as historically authentic.[25] Neumann adds that he believes, "...a pleasant, discreet, and tasteful vibrato adds life, luster, warmth, expressiveness, and sweetness to the tone."[26] His specification that vibrato should be "discreet" positions him slightly further from the "exclusive vibrato" edge of the conclusion spectrum than Uberti. Jerold, on the other hand, is placed closer to the vibrato edge because she concludes that "Today, large voices with normal vibrato have every reason to perform [early] repertoire with perfect confidence."[27]

Christopher Jackson, Bruno Turner, Ellen Hargis, and Fredrick K. Gable each advocate for a lighter use of vibrato than Jerold, Neumann, and Uberti, which is why they are placed closer to the center of the conclusion spectrum. Jackson pushes for "stylistically appropriate vibrato," which he describes as having a small extent[28] that does not obscure the intonation. He bases this opinion on historical sources, as well as reports from contemporary singers and choral directors who were asked to rate various types of vibrato based on vocal health and aesthetics.[29] Turner, however, bases his opinion almost entirely on aesthetics, rather than history or health. When asked about the "historically informed" push for no vibrato in early music, Turner responds, "less vibrato is a good thing, but," he

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[25] Mauro Uberti, "Vocal Techniques in Italy in the Second Half of the 16th Century," *Early Music* 9, no. 4 (1981): 490 – 491, accessed May 15, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3126691; Jerold, "Distinguishing Between Natural and Artificial Vibrato in Premodern Music," 161 – 165; Neumann, "The Vibrato Controversy," 26 – 27.
[26] Neumann, "The Vibrato Controversy," 26 – 27.
[27] The brackets are mine. See Jerold, "Distinguishing Between Natural and Artificial Vibrato in Premodern Music," 165.
[28] Extent is defined as the range of pitch fluctuation present in vibrato. For more, see Appendix A.
[29] Christopher Jackson, "An examination of vibrato: Use options for late renaissance vocal music," *The Choral Journal* 48, no. 1 (2007): 33-34, accessed May 15, 2016, http://www.jstor.org.dist.lib.usu.edu/stable/23556703.

asks, "whoever authorized no vibrato?"[30] He goes on to say that singing with a straight tone can sound robotic, but allowing a little bit of vibrancy can bring expression and color to the piece.[31] Hargis echoes Turner's praise of aesthetically pleasing vibrato, and adds: "a gentle vibration of the voice is natural and expressive, and an inherent part of a healthy singing voice."[32] However, she notes that "the use of vibrato is just one tool of style,"[33] and learning to control vibrato can not only be challenging and stimulating for singers, but also provide them with a wider range of expressive techniques.[34] Hargis' acceptance of controlled vibrato is what places her closer to the center of the conclusion spectrum than Jackson and Turner. Closer yet to the center of the conclusion spectrum is Gable. Like Hargis, Gable believes that a light, naturally produced vibrato is acceptable for early music. However, he makes clear that he is not in favor of modern vibrato.[35] He uses historical evidence to explain that modern vibrato was not commonly used until the Romantic era, and therefore, its use is unacceptable for earlier repertoire. [36] Though this appeal to historical authenticity weakens his argument, the information he presents may provide vocalists with new ideas of how to approach early music.

Donal Henahan's ideas position him in the very center of the conclusion spectrum. He believes that vibrato and nonvibrato singing are equally important means of expression. To

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[30] Peter Phillips and Bruno Turner, "Scholarship and Performance," *Early Music* 6, no. 2 (1978): 203, accessed May 22, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3125605.
[31] *Ibid.*, 203.
[32] Ellen Hargis, "The Solo Voice," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music,* ed. by Jeffery T. Kite-Powell, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994), 5.
[33] *Ibid.*, 6.
[34] *Ibid.*, 5–6.
[35] For more on modern vibrato, see Appendix A.
[36] Gable, "Some Observations Concerning Baroque and Modern Vibrato," 90 – 102.

support his argument, he describes a performance of Handel's *Athalia* where Emma Kirkby's "sweetly pure" voice provided a dramatic contrast to Joan Sutherland who, playing the villainous title role, employed a harsh vibrato on the word "barbarous" for dramatic effect.[37] Like Henahan, Julianne Baird also believes both techniques can be used for expression. However, she notes that singers should remove vibrato from dissonant, leading, and chromatic tones because it is best for enhancing emotional expression of the text, which places her slightly closer to the straight tone edge of the conclusion spectrum.[38] Baird's suggestion is problematic because it assumes that all dissonant, leading, and chromatic tones reflect the emotion of the text to which they were composed. Nevertheless, vocalists may want to consider her idea should they find themselves in this situation.

Eileen Strempel and Virginia Sublett can be found in the very center of the conclusion spectrum, though their reasoning differs from Henahan. They believe that both vibrato and straight tone are acceptable, but dependent on performance conditions. They explain that some early music repertoire was intended to be performed with little to no accompaniment in cathedrals or small venues where, in their opinion, vibrato would be distracting and over-stimulating. However, other early repertoires, such as Baroque opera, may be performed in larger spaces with bigger orchestral accompaniment, which would require the use of vibrato in order for the singer to be heard.[39] Sublett adds that it's important for vocalists to

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[37] Henahan, "When Vibrato is on Shaky Ground," 11.
[38] Bernard Sherman and Julianne Baird, "Beautiful Pearls," in *Inside Early Music: Conversations with Performers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 234-237
[39] Strempel, "Shifting Aesthetics of Vibrato," 408; Sublett, "Vibrato or Nonvibrato in Solo and Choral Singing," 540 – 541.

learn how to sing without vibrato in a healthy manner so they can easily switch between different vocal styles. She suggests choral directors avoid directly asking their singers to straighten the tone because this often causes excessive tension. Instead, they should instruct vocalists to purify or focus the pitch, which she argues is a more precise direction that signals flexibility within the voice.[40]

Like Sublett, Martha Elliot and George Newton also provide vocalists with original techniques for singing straight tone healthily, however, they are closer to the straight tone edge of the conclusion spectrum because they do not claim to support the use of vibrato in early music. After reviewing historical sources, Elliot concludes that early vocalists typically sung without vibrato. She suggests that modern singers withhold their vibrato by restricting airflow, rather than tightening the throat, should they wish to perform early music in this way.[41] Newton exhibits less acceptance of vibrato than Elliot, landing him closer to the straight tone end of the conclusion spectrum. He promotes the use of straight tone because he claims, "everyone is agreed that the heavy fat sound with its inevitably wide vibrato, which has been developing for more than a century to cope with the later romantic opera, is inappropriate for all music that preceded it."[42] This argument is problematic because modern vibrato is not universally accepted as inappropriate for all early music. However, Newton's advice for healthy straight tone singing may prove helpful for collegiate vocalists who wish to sing without vibrato. He proposes controlling vibrato by letting the larynx rise

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[40] *Ibid.*, 540-542.
[41] Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 17.
[42] George Newton, and Michael Mowbray-Silver, "Singing Early Music," *Early Music* 4, no. 2 (1976): 229, accessed May 19, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3125535.

slightly, keeping the tongue forward, and singing brighter vowels to avoid unnecessary tension.[43]

Approaching the far "exclusive straight tone" edge of the conclusion spectrum, Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, Alexander Blachly, Michael Mobray-Silver, and Edward Menerth prefer what I have defined as a "contemporary choral style," [44] which aims to focus pitch by creating a unified, or blended sound without vibrato. Davidson believes vibrato makes the harmony unclear in polyphonic Renaissance pieces. She argues for straight tone singing as the norm, but does not rule out the use of ornamental vibrato, slightly distancing her from the straight tone end of the conclusion spectrum. [45] Blachly occupies a similar position on the conclusion spectrum. Like Davidson, he does not forbid the use of vibrato outright, but claims that vocal ensembles should use minimal vibrato to achieve a well-balanced, focused sound. He supports his opinion with historical data, though his translation of said data is questionable.[46] Mowbray-Silver promotes the use of straight tone, describing a performance where, in his opinion, "it was good to hear the baroque masters sung with such purity and clarity, with no vibrato."[47] He primarily bases his opinion on this aesthetic

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[43] *Ibid.*, 229.

[44] Taruskin argues that performance practices created in the early music revival are actually a reflection of contemporary musical ideals. Donal Henahan agrees and adds that "the non-vibrato, deliberately colorless tone adopted by specialists when the early-music revival was getting under way in this century may simply have been an overreaction to the prevailing orchestral sound." However, Phillips notes that though this style may have been created under failed attempts to recreate the past, contemporary vocalists may still embrace this revolutionary sound in a personally authentic manner. See Taruskin, *Text and Act,* 102; Henahan, "When Vibrato is on Shaky Ground," 12; Phillips, "HIP Replacements," 97-100.

[45] Davidson, *Aspects of early Music and Performance*, 84.

[46] Blachly quotes Franchinus Gaffurius as criticizing "tones having a wide and ringing vibrato, since these tones do not maintain a true pitch." However, he does not cite his translation (which uses terminology that did not exist in 1496 when the original was written), or provide the quote in its original language for reference. See Blachly, "On Singing and the Vocal Ensemble I," 15.

[47] George Newton and Michael Mowbray Silver, "Singing Early Music," *Early Music* 4, no. 2 (1976): 231, accessed May 19, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3125535.

purity, though he mentions historical performance practice as well.[48] In contrast to other authors on this end of the spectrum, Menerth bases his support for a focused tone entirely on historical data. He claims that contemporary singers should refrain from vibrato in order to create a thin, clear tone because vocalists of the Renaissance did not know "the modern 'art' of vocal coloring."[49] It should be noted that not only does Merenth fail to cite his historical claim, but his reasoning is problematic because it relies on the impossibility of knowing what vocalists sounded like in the Renaissance. Though his supporting logic is problematic, his resulting opinion adds to the idea that a contemporary choral sound is one style that can effectively be used in early vocal music.

After discussing the arguments of modern authors, it can be concluded that more arguments of vocal health are well-supported than those based on historical data. Though unsound logic can be found in arguments on both influence spectrums, a greater amount of fallacies appear in historically influenced opinions than those rooted in vocal health. Many historical arguments fall victim to authentic claims which are not only refuted by a substantial amount of scholars,[50] but also weak considering the term "vibrato" did not exist at the time the supporting accounts were written. This does not mean, however, that collegiate vocalists should disregard these authors' opinions. Studying all arguments, whether the supporting logic be sound or unsound, may provide insight as to why directors give certain instructions about vibrato and also help singers understand how influences can

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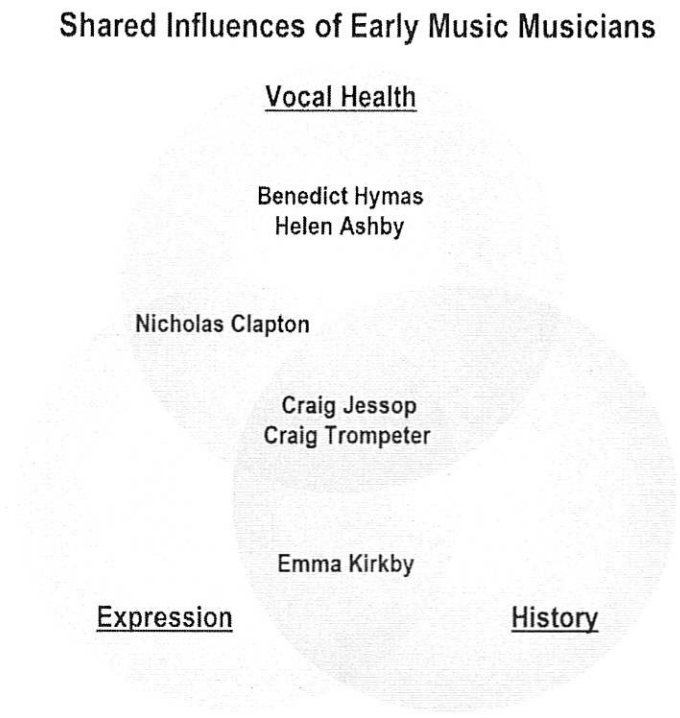
[48] *Ibid.*, 229 – 231.
[49] Edward F. Jr. Menerth, "Singing in Style: Renaissance," *Music Educators Journal* 52, no. 5 (1966): 58, accessed May 19, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3390747.
[50] See footnote 14.

effectively or ineffectively be used to inform vibrato practices of their own. Vocal students may also find it beneficial to enhance their study of written arguments by observing the applied methods and opinions of successful early music musicians, as discussed in the following interviews.

Interviews

Interviews were held with six acclaimed early music musicians who appeared to express influences similar to the previously discussed authors. As can be observed in the venn diagram on the following page, most interviewees believe vibrato use is in part dependent on vocal health, and about half mention history in their arguments. Another half believe vibrato to be a tool of expression, an idea that though mentioned by some,[51] was not as common among authors. Similar to the influence-conclusion relationship of arguments in the preceding literature review, these influences have no correlation with consequent vocal practices.

[51] See Bruno Turner's argument on page 11, Ellen Hargis' on page 12, Donal Henahan's on page 12, and Julianne Baird's on page 13.



Stile Antico (Benedict Hymas and Helen Ashby)

The early music vocal ensemble Stile Antico is known for its award-winning recordings of Renaissance choral works. In addition to winning esteemed prizes, like the Gramophone Award for Early Music, Stile Antico has also performed in prestigious venues all over Europe and North America, including Buckingham Palace and Washington's Library of Congress. In August of 2016, the group appeared at the Dartington International Summer School and Festival in Totnes, UK, which is where I interviewed two members about their take on vibrato in early music: Benedict Hymas (tenor) and Helen Ashby (soprano). Each wish to make clear that the opinions they shared are theirs, and do not necessarily represent the ensemble as a whole. However, their comments provide a general idea of how Stile Antico functions and what may determine the group's use of vibrato.

Both Hymas and Ashby admit that vibrato is not something that the group addresses directly. Hymas credits Stile Antico's sound to their unique group dynamic. He explains that the group does not have a conductor, and instead works like a string quartet where each member provides input and direction. Hymas claims that Stile Antico's use of vibrato is a by-product of this group dynamic, saying, "Vibrato is just one of those things that sort of becomes unified, though I'm not sure how, exactly. I don't think any of us know how it works."[52] Ashby notes that the ensemble discusses indirect aspects of sound that may affect vibrato, such as having a "clean sound,"[53] which Hymas claims is a euphemism for less vibrato, or "warming the sound,"[54] which means to add more vibrato, according to Ashby.

It appears that historical data does not have a significant influence on whether or not the members of Stile Antico use vibrato. When asked if the group bases its use of vibrato on historical practices, Hymas simply replied, "We don't look into it specifically,"[55] (a curious response about an ensemble whose very name means "Antique Style.") Instead, Hymas and Ashby seem to root their opinions of vibrato in ideas of vocal health and aesthetics.

Hymas and Ashby believe that removing all vibrato produces an undesirable, unhealthy sound. Ashby claims, "If you say 'don't use any vibrato,' people feel sort of boxed in, and it's not necessarily very helpful."[56] Hymas agrees and adds, "I think that's unhealthy, and you can sometimes hear that in other ensembles. They're trying too hard to maintain that

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[52] Benedict Hymas, interview by Kaylee Ann Simmons, August 3, 2016.
[53] Helen Ashby, interview by Kaylee Ann Simmons, August 3, 2016.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] Hymas, interview.
[56] Ashby, interview.

straight sound, and it can sound very boring and unhealthy."[57] However, both Hymas and Ashby also claim that too much vibrato is not desirable or healthy, either. According to Ashby, "There's a difference between natural vibrato where the voice is vibrating normally-healthily, and a sort of plastered on wobble, which is not very helpful."[58] Hymas agrees and adds "I think that when vibrato is switched on and sort of laid on really thickly for the sake of it, it's not good in any context, let alone early music."[59]

In addition to vocal health, it seems that Ashby and Hymas believe the use of vibrato to be a matter of aesthetics. Ashby says that vibrato may be dependent on performance settings, similar to authors Virginia Sublet and Eileen Strempel. She claims that opera singers need a lot of vibrato to carry over a 100-piece orchestra, "But," she continues, "if you hear them try to sing a Bach chorale, they sound absolutely horrendous because you can't actually hear the harmony."[60] Hymas shares Ashby's opinion, saying, "The thing is, with this kind of music, it makes more sense to sing with a slightly straighter tone," though he also admits that the members of Stile Antico "undoubtedly use quite a lot of vibrato in all the pieces [they] sing."[61]

Hymas and Ashby's comments show that vibrato may be one aspect of an overall desired sound. Aside from desiring a healthy quality, it is likely that members of Stile Antico have a similar opinions of ideal sound and aesthetics rooted in English choral traditions. Collegiate vocalists may want to consider what overall sound they wish to produce, (i.e.

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[57] Hymas, interview.
[58] Ashby, interview.
[59] Hymas, interview.
[60] Ashby, interview.
[61] "we" has been replaced with "they;" Hymas, interview.

healthy, warm, cool, full, piercing, etc.) and let vibrato be a byproduct of creating those qualities, as Hymas and Ashby explain.

Nicholas Clapton

Nicholas Clapton is a countertenor, vocal coach, and author of several musicological books.[62] In previous years, he taught voice at institutions such as Trinity College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music. Now, Clapton travels around the world as a vocal coach, offering courses at Dartington, as well as institutions such as the Franz Liszt Music University in Budapest, and *Si parla, si canta* summer course in Urbania, Italy.

I interviewed Clapton during a private voice lesson at Dartington. In this interview, he immediately dismissed historical documents as having any role in determining whether or not to use vibrato, saying, "I think the reliance on documentation and statements that people make that vibrato was not generally used in music of the 17th and 18th century is extremely misleading."[63] He then went on to discuss the two factors that primarily influence his opinion: textual expression and vocal health.

Clapton believes that vibrato should always come through as an expression of the text, "regardless of style or period." He thinks, "If you actually fill your lungs and emotionally express the words that you're speaking about, your voice will want to vibrate."[64] He

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[62] These books include *Thoughts on Singing: and the teaching thereof*; *Moreschi and the Voice of the Castrato*; and *Budapest: City of Music*.

[63] Nicholas Clapton, interview by Kaylee Ann Simmons, Dartington, August 4, 2016.

[64] I responded to this statement by asking why non-classical singers, such as those who sing Jazz and Musical Theatre, don't exhibit a continual vibrato even though they sing with emotion. Clapton admitted he did not have an answer for this question, but he guessed that "It doesn't happen like that in Jazz and in Musical Theatre maybe because the rhetorical language they use is coming from a place very different."; Ibid.

supports this idea by claiming that vibrato naturally occurs when people speak passionately. Clapton uses Martin Luther King Jr.'s quavering voice in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech as an example. [65]

In addition to vibrato being an emotive consequence, Clapton also believes vibrato is the natural result of a healthily produced sound. However, he warns that, "There are a lot of ways to get the voice to vibrate, and a lot of them come from bad teaching and bad technical procedures."[66] Clapton gives vocal examples of healthy vs. unhealthy vibrato, which can be found on track #2. He describes his healthy vibrato example as simply "shimmering across the sound," compared to his unhealthy vibrato examples which exhibit dramatic alterations of oscillation rate.[67] According to Clapton, those who believe vibrato should not be used in early music most likely confuse true, healthy vibrato with a forced, unhealthy vibrato that, in his opinion, is unsuitable for all types of singing.

Clapton's views may provide vocalists with ideas of how to approach vibrato in early music, however, his perhaps overstating his arguments. While it is true that oscillation rates may indicate whether a sound is being healthily produced, vocalists may also want to keep in mind that the extent of vibrato can healthily be reduced to create a "straight tone."[68] In this way, singers are capable of creating both vibrato and straight tone with good technique. To address his comments about expression, Clapton's statement that voices should always vibrate with emotion might be an exaggeration. This type of emotional

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[65] See track #1.
[66] Clapton, interview.
[67] For more on rate of oscillation, see Appendix A.
[68] See Appendix A.

outpour may not be appropriate in all situations, such as performing pieces with light-hearted texts. However, it can be suitable to let vibrato come through as a result of brimming emotions should the singer wish to convey certain texts in this way.

Emma Kirkby

Emma Kirkby is a renowned English soprano and early music specialist. As a founding member of the acclaimed Taverner Choir, and with over one hundred early music recordings to her name, she was awarded the Queen's Medal for Music in 2011. Though Kirkby is still an active performer, she also works as a vocal coach. She has offered vocal courses at Dartington for over 20 years, and currently teaches at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Unlike members of Stile Antico and Clapton, Kirkby did not convey any influence of vocal health in my interactions with her. Rather, it appears that her opinion of vibrato is primarily influenced by her belief that textual expression is the most important aspect of early vocal music. This is evident in a written email response, as well as feedback she provided during her masterclass at Dartington. When asked to give her opinion of the role of vibrato in early music, Kirkby responded with the following email:

> Briefly, I would say the vital things in singing baroque music are:
>
> 1) a real engagement with the words; they need to be "embodied" and to dictate the volume you choose and the effects you may add. Singers in that era all learned rhetoric from their earliest years. This means also the use of appropriate gestures – this is a thorny topic but I know that the right stance and use of the hands will help everything!
>
> 2) a rhythmic vitality but also freedom - articulation more as baroque instruments use - not the seamless legato beloved of later styles but a sense of exploration within the line.

> 3) use of vibrato not as the basis of your sound but as a subtle colouring of the tone once it's clearly established. Clear and vigorous consonants are the most effective thing to achieve a clean and ringing start ("onset") to the note; that allows both wonderful duetting with whatever obbligato instruments may be with you, and also the best dissonances, beautiful resolutions and perfectly synchronised endings between singers - in some of the finest and most challenging vocal ensemble pieces ever written.
>
> Vibrato was a conscious choice, an acceptance of what can happen as that clear note rings on.[69]

Kirkby's value of lyrical expression appears to be what influences her argument about the relationship of vibrato to diction in her third point. Clearly, she wants the text to be understood, which is likely why she believes that vibrato should not get in the way of clean diction, as this is what allows the audience to hear the words.

In addition to writing about the importance of diction in her email, Kirkby expanded on this idea during a masterclass held at Dartington. During this masterclass, she warned that vibrato should not obscure the text in any way. She advised to first allow a clear, vibratoless consonant to come through. Then, she explained that once the consonant is in place and a clean vowel follows, it is permissible to allow the vibrato to "warm up." She gave a vocal demonstration of this which can be found on track #3.

Though she still primarily focuses on textual expression, the remainder of Kirkby's email and masterclass feedback contain other ideas similar to those of Ashby, and authors Julianne Baird, Eileen Strempel and Virginia Sublett.[70] In her third point, Kirkby advises to refrain from vibrato on dissonant passages to better produce a clear pitch, an argument similar to Baird's. This was reiterated in her masterclass when she said, "You want to hear

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[69] Emma Kirkby, e-mail message to Kaylee Ann Simmons, August 7, 2016.
[70] See Baird, Strempel, and Sublett on page 13.

the words firstly, because it's all about speech, and then you want to hear the dissonances and resolutions." She then made points similar to Ashby, Strempel, and Sublett, claiming that more vibrato may be needed to carry over a large orchestra, but pointing out that most early repertoire "either happens in small close-to places or in big churches where vibrato doesn't work either because you can't hear the notes properly."

Though Kirkby is not primarily influenced by historical data, it appears that history may play a role in her opinion about vibrato. According to her e-mail, her appeal to textual expression is rooted in her belief that "Singers in that era all learned rhetoric from their earliest years." While it is true that early singers received their vocal training through the church, which also taught rhetoric, claiming that *all* singers studied rhetoric may be an overstatement. Nonetheless, her consequent vocal practices have proven successful in her career, and may be useful to collegiate vocalists as well.

Craig Trompeter

Craig Trompeter is a baroque cellist and violist da gamba. He is the director of the Haymarket Opera in Chicago, previous principal cellist of Chicago's period instrument orchestra, Baroque Band, and has appeared in concert with the Newberry Consort, Music Maris, Chicago Opera Theater, and the Smithsonian Chamber Music Society. In the spring of 2016, Trompeter directed the USU Performance Practice Institute's production of Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina,* and performed in the American Festival Chorus' production of J.S. Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion.* It was during his stay in Logan that I interviewed him on his views of vibrato in early music.

In his interview, Trompeter showed influences of vocal health, expression, and historical data. He first brought up vocal health. Trompeter claims that singing without any vibrato is unhealthy, stating, "I'm a believer in vocal health. A true straight tone is really hard to make and not particularly pleasant to listen to." However, he admits that he tends to like voices "on the purer side of the spectrum, but they have to sound healthy," explaining that by 'purer,' he means a sound where the listener is not particularly aware of the vibrato.[76]

Similar to author Donald Henahan, Trompeter believes that both vibrato and straight tone techniques have expressive potential. He claims, "You can use a straight tone for effect if you're saying something really mean or cruel. Likewise, you could increase your vibrato, [...] it just has to make sense with the text."[77] He goes on to say that it is best for singers to learn how to add or remove their vibrato at will in order to have a wide array of expressive devices from which to choose.

It appears that history has an influence on Tropeter's approaches to vibrato. He explains that there are more historical possibilities to consider than those presented in written documents, saying:

> One thing to think about when doing research on historical performance is if they talked about it like, "don't do this," it means that someone was doing it. "Don't vibrate on every note!" Well, *somebody* was. What makes that person wrong, and the person who wrote it down right?[78]

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[76] Craig Trompeter, interview by Kaylee Ann Simmons, Logan, March 23, 2016.
[77] *Ibid.*
[78] *Ibid.*

He went on to express an opinion similar to that of author Richard Taruskin's, saying, "What I love about studying performance practice is that it gives me more ideas. It gives me more crayons in my crayon box. It's not getting rid of stuff; I'm actually getting more ideas."[79]

The last influence discussed by Trompeter was harmony. Like author Julianne Baird, he claims that less vibrato should be used in dissonant passages, particularly where choral pieces are concerned. [80] According to Trompeter, less vibrato helps makes a clearer sound in this instance. However, he willingly admits that this is his personal preference, not a universal concept, saying, "You could do the opposite, I suppose. It's really just taste, as far as harmony goes."[81] This preference shows Trompeter's appeal to contemporary choral styles, similar to writers on the straight tone end of the conclusion spectrum in the literature review.

The whole of Trompeter's argument shows that both the presence and absence of vibrato can be used in many different ways, depending on the taste of the singer. With each personal opinion he expressed, Trompeter also showed a different viewpoint or approach to the same situation. This demonstrates how vocal students can vary their vibrato use to fit their own personal tastes, and also learn from and accept other approaches that do not correspond with their own.

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[79] *Ibid*; To compare to Taruskin, see page 7.
[80] To compare to Baird's argument, see page 13.
[81] Trompeter, interview.

Craig Jessop

Dr. Craig Jessop is the conductor of the American Festival Chorus (AFC) and dean of the Caine College of the Arts at Utah State University. Jessop not only received his doctorate in conducting from Stanford University, but was also a student of "the Dean of American choral conductors," Robert Shaw.[82] Before becoming director of the AFC in 2008, Jessop spent a decade conducting the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. In the spring of 2016, I participated in his production of J.S. Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*, and interviewed him during the rehearsal process leading up to this performance.

In his interview, Jessop discussed vocal health, expressivity, and history, though these elements do not appear to directly influence his instructions for vibrato. Rather, it seems that he is predominantly swayed by personal interpretation of the music. This may be because Jessop's career has demanded that he develop the skills of a generalist, requiring broad knowledge of the entire choral repertoire.

At first, Jessop discussed common vibrato influences similar to the previously discussed authors and early music specialists. When asked about his opinion of vibrato, Jessop made a statement resembling the arguments of Kirkby and Clapton, saying, "I've always felt that the vibrato is an indication of a normal, healthy singing voice. It's important. But also, it should be used an element of expression."[83] He then took this argument in a direction similar to Trompeter, explaining that varying degrees of vibrato can be used to convey different emotions. He claimed, "The singer needs to control the vibrato, not the vibrato

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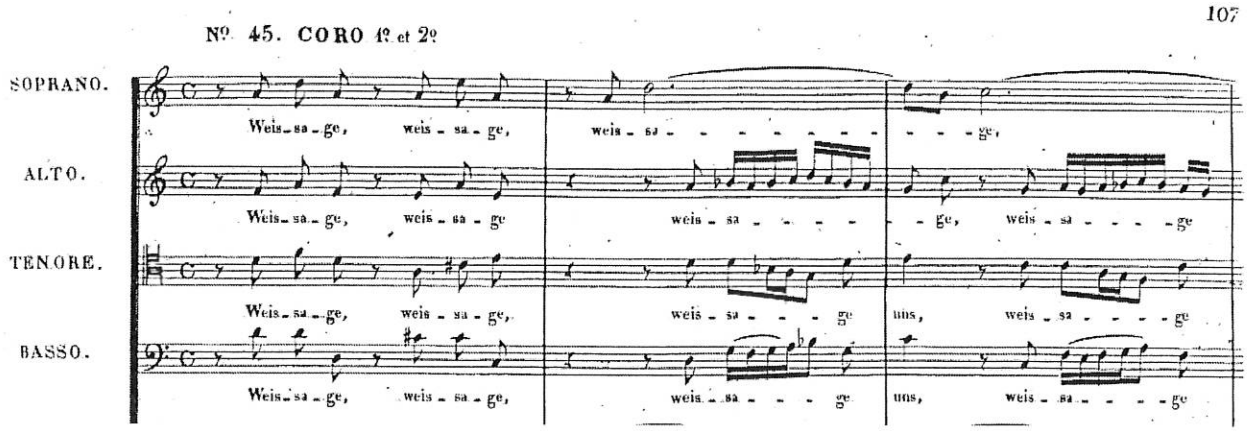
[82] "Robert Shaw," *Singers.com,* accessed February 12, 2016, https://www.singers.com/choral/director/Robert-Shaw/.

[83] Craig Jessop, interview by Kaylee Ann Simmons, Logan, February 29, 2016.

the singer. Vibrato is an element of expression and should be adaptable to the demands of the music."[84] Jessop explained that these demands may depend on the period in which the music was composed, but are ultimately up to the interpretation of the conductor. In reference to his performance of the *Saint Matthew Passion*, he claimed, "I want it to be a historically informed performance. I would not approach Bach the way I'd approach, say, Brahms. There's two hundred years difference in the writing!" He then went on to describe how he personally approaches the music of Bach, which has many similarities to some of the other authors and performers considered in this paper, but like with the members of *Stile Antico,* the origin and historicity of his viewpoints are obscured.

Jessop claimed that in his opinion as a conductor, it is acceptable for soloists to use vibrato liberally in lyrical arias, but members of the choir do not have the same freedom because they need to be unified. In the choral sections, he believes that vibrato "has to be narrowed for clarity" during melismatic passages and cadences. However, "sometimes in those beautiful soaring lines, a little moment of vibrato is important for that beautiful spin that the human voice is capable of."[85] He explains that this typically happens when a note is held over a bar, using the soprano line in the following excerpt from the *Saint Matthew Passion* as an example:

[84] *Ibid.*
[85] *Ibid.*



He says that in an excerpt like this, "it can be very hard to sustain that held note for a long time, crescendo, and not add some vibrato because it starts to hurt, vocally."[86]

Jessop's specific instructions for vibrato provide insight to the rationale of a director. Collegiate vocalists may find it helpful to experiment with these instructions. Considered in tandem with other more specialist sources, vocal students may determine whether or not these techniques meet the demands of other early repertoires they perform.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the data shows that there is no single "right way" to approach vibrato in early music repertoire. The use or lack of vibrato is not inherent to the music, but rather, changes from piece to piece depending on the values of the performer. Authors and musicians discussed in this project appear to commonly value vocal health, historical data, and expression, though their values do not correlate with their consequent conclusions. By studying the relationship of these values to possible vocal practices, collegiate vocalists may not only better understand conflicting directions they receive, but also begin to develop

[86] *Ibid.*

their own values and approaches to vibrato. The arguments presented by these early music musicians, contemporary authors, and early writers can provide vocalists with new and exciting ways to perform early music. It is the responsibility of the musician to consider each argument and experiment with the ideas they provide until a satisfying level of musicality is achieved. In this way, singers may be able to make decisions about vibrato in early music that are both informed as well as personally authentic.

Appendix A:
The Physiology of Vibrato

It is widely accepted that vibrato occurs when laryngeal muscles[87] are activated in balance with subglottal air pressure, causing fluctuation of frequency (pitch) and intensity (volume). This oscillation typically occurs at a rate of six or seven cycles per second, with an extent (pitch fluctuation) of about a half step.[88] Lack of vibrato in a singer's voice is generally referred to as "straight tone." Straight tone singing can be a result of unhealthy vocal production, such as excess tension within laryngeal muscles, or poor breath support.[89] However, singers can healthily reduce the extent of vibrato, making it sound like a straighter tone.[90] The reverse, that is, healthily expanding the extent of vibrato, is also possible. Vibrato with an extent larger than a half step that oscillates at a healthy rate is commonly known as "modern vibrato," because this technique is often employed by modern classically trained singers.[91]

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[87] Specifically, the cricothyroid (CT) and thyroarytenoid (TA). These muscles are responsible for changing pitch; the CT lengthens and thins the vocal folds, causing pitch to rise, and the TA shortens and thickens the folds, causing pitch to descend.

[88] Nix, "Shaken, Not Stirred," 411 – 412, Scott McCoy, *Your Voice: the Basics* (Gahanna, OH: Inside View Press, 2015), 4-5, e-book; Carl E. Seashore, "The Natural History of the Vibrato," *Proceedings of the National Academy of the United States of America* 17, no. 12 (1913): 623, accessed May 19, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/86010.

[89] Vicki L. Stoer and Helen Swank, "Mending Misused Voices," *Music Educators Journal* 65, no. 4 (1978), 47-51, accessed May 22, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3395549.

[90] Nix explains that at least a little vibrato is always present, even while singing straight tone. One's heart rate naturally produces rhythmic pulsations in the CT and TA, which cause subtle fluctuations of frequency. See Nix, "Shaken, Not Stirred," 412 –413, 417; Olson, "Vibrato vs Nonvibrato," 563; Gable, "Some Observations Concerning Baroque and Modern Vibrato," 94.

[91] Ibid., 91, 93 – 94; Elliot, *Singing in Style,* 17.

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Reflective Writing

I consider this project to be the capstone of my undergraduate education because it encompasses the most challenging and fascinating aspects of my studies at USU. Vibrato is something that has always intrigued me, and something I have struggled to understand in my vocal studies, especially when performing early repertoires. Throughout my participation in the music program at USU, I received conflicting instructions about vibrato from directors and teachers. I can recall days when I would be told to "wiggle through every note, always!" in masterclass, and then, not an hour later, hear my choral director say "Forget everything you've ever learned in voice lessons- no vibrato!" These conflicting instructions did not sit well with me. I wanted to find a way to use the techniques I learned from my voice teachers while singing in the style my choral director (and I) preferred for early music, and choral music in general. This inspired me to research the use of vibrato in contemporary performances of early music.

The project evolved from my original vision to the final product. Initially, I wanted to evaluate how vibrato was used in contemporary performances of J.S. Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*. At the time, I was performing in Dr. Jessop's production of the passion just before Sir Elliot Gardiner was scheduled to perform the piece with the Monteverdi Choir that summer in Aldeburgh, UK. I planned on attending the Aldeburgh festival as a Hesse student so that I could compare the Monteverdi Choir's use of vibrato to Jessop's. However, I was not accepted as Hesse student and consequently could not attend Gardiner's performance. As I thought about how I could reconstruct my research, I realized that my questions about

vibrato reached beyond my involvement in the *Saint Mathew Passion*. Over the past year or so I had developed a love for early music and wanted to learn more about performing all kinds of works from the 16th and 17th century, so I decided to expand my research to early music in general, rather than one particular work. Around the same time I came to this conclusion, it was suggested that I look into going to the Dartington Music Festival at the end of the summer. I was able to register for classes with Stile Antico at Dartington, but I was told I would not be able to participate in Emma Kirkby or Nicholas Clapton's workshops because it was past the audition deadline. When I arrived at Dartington, I made an effort to reach out to Kirkby and Clapton regardless of my unmet registration requirements, and consequently was able to conduct the interviews I needed for my research.

Though the process included unexpected and frustrating events, overall, I feel that each "setback" actually redirected my project in a positive way. Working through being denied entrance to Aldebrugh and courses I needed at Dartington forced me to think critically and learn how to come up with creative solutions to discouraging problems. By doing so, I was not only able to complete my research, but also take part in Kirkby and Clapton's classes under special permission and make connections with many other early music musicians at Dartington. These events gave me an end product that I feel is more applicable to a greater amount of repertoire and musicians than what my original project may have produced.

I believe my research can be useful to early music vocalists, collegiate and otherwise. Throughout my project, I realized that like me, many other musicians struggle with determining how to use vibrato in early music performance. I noticed my peers frequently debating the matter during rehearsals for the *Saint Matthew Passion* and Franscesca

Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*. Later, I found articles and engaged in conversations at Dartington that confirmed this issue is not only wide-spread among collegiate vocalists, but professional early music musicians and scholars as well. I chose to direct my research towards collegiate vocalists because I believed it was more applicable to my personal experience and to the experiences of my peer audience, however, I believe this research is also beneficial to early music vocalists beyond the university. My conclusions not only demonstrate how vocal students can understand and reconcile conflicting instructions from their directors, but also how any singer can make individual decisions about vibrato by developing their own musical values.

Completing this project deepened my research experience within my field of study and added depth to my overall education. Studying voice in and of itself is a type of research. In my practice, I constantly question and analyze what my voice is doing, and attempt to improve my technique through experimentation. This project enhanced my research by adding a traditional academic element and giving me more materials with which to experiment in my practice. The readings and interviews increased my understanding of the history behind early repertoires, the anatomy of vibrato, and how vibrato can be used and produced in different ways. The writing component helped me organize this information and develop my own conclusions that have influenced how I approach early music, and even music of other time periods as well.

This learning process has been such a positive experience that it has altered my future goals. Throughout the course of this project I have become completely enthralled with learning about the history and performance practices of early repertoires, and I feel that I

would be very dissatisfied ending this education with my graduation this December. Though I originally planned to pursue a career as a choral educator, I now hope to continue studying early music in a postgraduate degree and settle in a career close to this field of study. I am incredibly grateful to my mentor, Dr. Scheer, for guiding me along this path and helping me prepare to meet these new goals.

Author Bio

Mezzo soprano Kaylee Ann Simmons is majoring in Music Education with a Choral emphasis at Utah State University. In December of 2016, she will graduate with a Bachelors in Music and Minor in Elementary Education. She is a cofounder of the USU Choral Scholars, a research vocal ensemble that has been awarded scholarship through the Caine College of the Arts, worked with acclaimed musicians such as Stephen Cleobury, Bob Chilcott, and Paul Phoenix, and performed in numerous university and local music productions. In addition to performing with and directing the Choral Scholars during her time at USU, Kaylee frequently sang under the direction of Dr. Craig Jessop as well, recently appearing in his production of J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in the spring of 2016. She was also recruited to participate in multiple Performance Practice Institute productions over the years, such as a lecture-recital of Byrd and Tallis, J.S. Bach's *Christ lag in Todes Banden*, and to sing the role of *Dama Disincantata* in Franscesca Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina*. With each exposure to these early repertoires, Kaylee developed a deeper interest in pre-1750 music, which inspired the topic of her Honors Thesis Project. This project grew to be much bigger and influential than she could have anticipated in the beginning. Though she originally planned to teach music in public schools after she graduates, Kaylee now hopes to pursue a postgraduate degree in early music in order to continue learning about this subject of which she is increasingly growing fonder and fonder.